



City of Beaumont

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jefferson County sued the City of Beaumont in May of 2016 related to the cost of housing prisoners. There is a pending case that is set for trial in October.

The City of Beaumont discovered approximately 10 years ago that Jefferson County was treating the cities of Nederland; Port Neches and Groves differently than they were Beaumont and the City of Port Arthur. Jefferson County was charging a higher rate per day per prisoner for Beaumont and Port Arthur. We felt this was unfair and wanted all cities to be treated the same. The County moved forward and in 2011 entered into agreements with Nederland; Port Neches and Groves at a rate of \$55.00 per day and offered the cities of Beaumont and Port Arthur a rate of \$75.00 per day. Of course this was a continuation of the difference in treatment.

The second issue, that has not been resolved, relates to when a prisoner becomes the "responsibility of the County," at which point the expenses begin to be paid for by the County. A prisoner goes before a Magistrate, usually within 24 hours of being arrested, and they are "committed" to jail if the paperwork is correct. The City of Beaumont believes that when the prisoner is "committed" to jail, they are the responsibility of the County and the County should **pay** to house that prisoner. Jefferson County wants the cities in Jefferson County to pay for the prisoner until they are formally charged by the District Attorney's Office. **We are not aware of another county in Texas, out of 254 counties, that does business this way.** We believe this practice by Jefferson County is used to decrease their expenses and obligations under State Law. The City of Beaumont believes Jefferson County is overcharging them hundreds of thousands of dollars each year.

The last executed contract with Jefferson County related to the housing of prisoners was in **1986**. The City's Administration works well with the District Attorney's Office and the Sheriff's Department. The County Judge and the Commissioner's Court can resolve this matter and we sincerely hope they will.